

Application/Control Number: 09/973,221

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Claims PTO

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Claim 1 cancelled

2. (New) A method of handling traffic on a network node that is operative to receive, periodically, successive hello communications, the traffic including data communications, and the method comprising acts of:

(A) detecting that a first number of successive hello communications have not been received at the network node; and

(B) directing the network node to drop at least a portion of the traffic at the network node in response to act (A).

3. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein the traffic also comprises one or more hello communications, and act (B) comprises directing the network node to drop only the data communications included in the traffic such that the one or more hello communications included in the traffic are not dropped.

4. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein act (B) comprises directing the network node to drop all of the data communications included in the traffic.

5. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the network node is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path, and wherein the method further comprises acts of:

(C) detecting that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the network node; and

(D) directing a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to act (C).

6. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the network node is operative to receive a threshold amount of traffic, and wherein the method further comprises, prior to acts (A) and (B), acts of:

(C) determining that an amount of the traffic on the network node exceeds the threshold amount; and

(D) directing the network node to drop an amount of the traffic that exceeds the threshold amount.

7. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the network node is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path, and wherein the method further comprises acts of:

(E) detecting that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the network node; and

(F) directing transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to act (E).

8. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the network node is a switch.

9. (New) A switch on a communications network for handling traffic, the switch operative to receive, periodically, successive hello communications and the switch comprising:

one or more ports to receive traffic at the switch, the traffic including data communications;

a detector to detect that a first number of successive hello communications have not been received at the switch; and

a processor to direct dropping at least a portion of the traffic in response to the detection.

10. (New) The switch of claim 9, wherein the traffic also comprises one or more hello communications, and the processor is further operative to direct dropping of only

the data communications included in the traffic such that the one or more hello communications included in the traffic are not dropped.

11. (New) The switch of claim 10, wherein the processor is further operative to direct dropping of all of the data communications included in the traffic.

12. (New) The switch of claim 9, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path,

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and

wherein the processor is further operative to direct a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to the detection of the second number.

13. (New) The switch of claim 9, wherein the switch is operative to receive a threshold amount of traffic, and

wherein the processor is further operative to determine that the amount of traffic at the switch, prior to detecting the first number, exceeds the threshold amount and to direct dropping an amount of the traffic that exceeds the threshold amount.

14. (New) The switch of claim 13, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path,

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and

wherein the processor is further operative to direct a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to the detection of the second number.

15. (New) A switch on a communications network for handling traffic, the switch operative to receive, periodically, successive hello communications and the switch comprising:

one or more ports to receive traffic at the switch, the traffic including data communications;

a detector to detect that a first number of successive hello communications have not been received at the switch; and

means for directing a dropping of at least a portion of the traffic in response to the detection.

16. (New) The switch of claim 15, wherein the traffic also comprises one or more hello communications, and wherein the means for directing comprises means for directing the switch to drop only the data communications included in the traffic such that the one or more hello communications included in the traffic are not dropped.

17. (New) The switch of claim 16, wherein the means for directing comprises means for directing the switch to drop all of the data communications included in the traffic.

18. (New) The switch of claim 15, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path,

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and the switch further comprises:

means for directing a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response the detection of the second number.

19. (New) The switch of claim 15, wherein the switch is operative to receive a threshold amount of traffic, and the switch further comprises:

means for determining that an amount of the traffic on the switch, prior to detecting the first number, exceeds the threshold amount; and

means for directing the switch to drop an amount of the traffic that exceeds the threshold amount.

20. (New) The switch of claim 19, wherein a first user and a second user are connected to each other by a primary communications path and a redundant communications path, and the switch is operative to transmit traffic between the first user and the second user along the primary communications path and operative to refrain from transmitting traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path, and

wherein the detector is further operative to detect that a second number of consecutive hello communications, including the first number of consecutive hello communications, have not been received at the switch, and wherein the switch further comprises:

means for directing a transmission of the traffic between the first user and the second user along the redundant communications path in response to the detection of the second number.